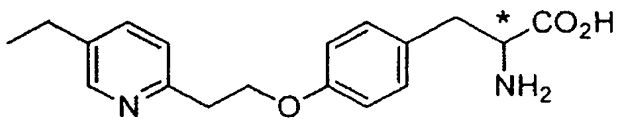
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

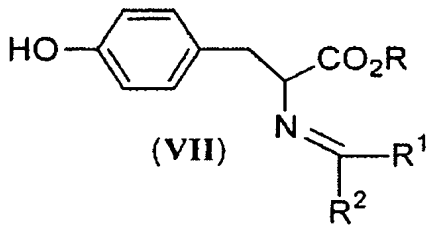
1. (Currently amended) The compound of formula (IV):



(IV)

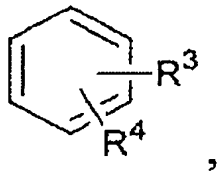
~~in the form of either one of its two pure enantiomers, of racemic mixtures, or of mixtures enriched in either of its two enantiomers, as well as its salts, solvates and hydrates~~ or a salt thereof.

2. (Currently amended) A method of production of the compound of claim 1, characterized in that it comprises reaction of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

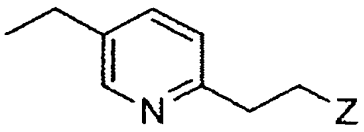
in which: R can be hydrogen or a C_1-C_4 alkyl group; ~~R^1 and R^2 can be, without distinction,~~ each of R^1 and R^2 is selected individually from hydrogen or an aryl group of formula



,

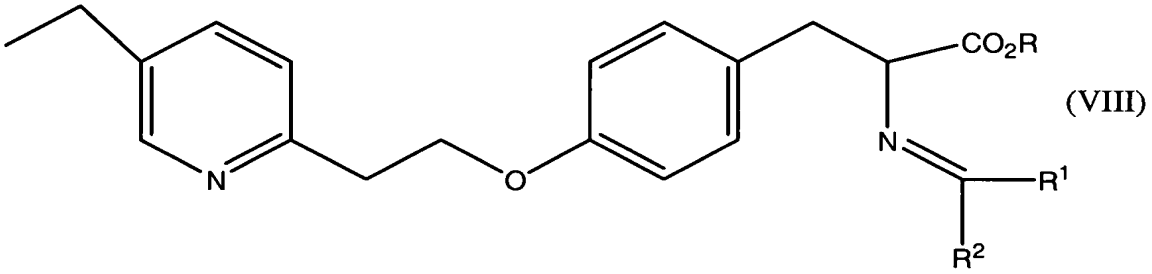
in which R^3 and R^4 can be, without distinction, hydrogen, or a C_1-C_6 alkyl group, or a C_1-C_4 alkoxy group;

with the condition that R^1 and R^2 cannot both be hydrogen,
with a compound of formula (III)



(III)

in which Z is a leaving group, to obtain the compound of formula (VIII)



(VIII)

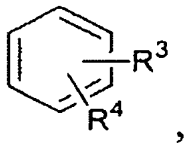
which, subsequently, is submitted to deprotection of the amino group and ~~hydrolysis of the ester group~~ when R is a C1-C4 alkyl group hydrolysis of the COOR group of a compound of formula VIII to convert R as alkyl to R as hydrogen.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2, characterized in that R is the methyl group.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2, characterized in that Z is a sulphonic ester.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2, characterized in that Z is the methanesulphonyl (mesyl) group.

6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2 characterized in that R^1 is hydrogen and R^2 is an aryl group of formula

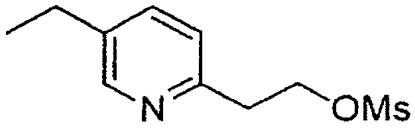


,

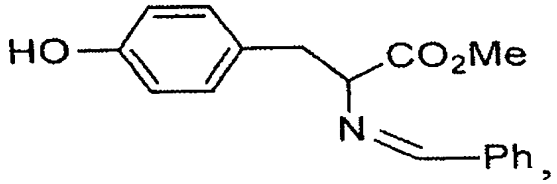
in which R^3 and R^4 can be, without distinction, hydrogen, a C_1-C_6 alkyl group or a C_1-C_4 alkoxy group.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2, characterized in that R^1 is hydrogen and R^2 is phenyl.

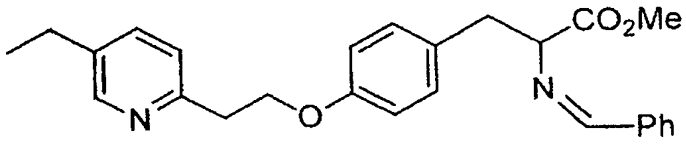
8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2, characterized in that it comprises reaction of the compound of formula



with the compound of formula



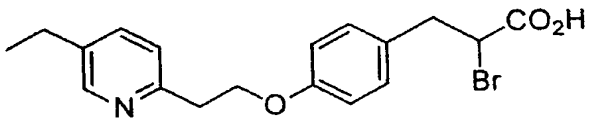
to obtain the compound of formula



which, subsequently, is submitted to deprotection of the benzylideneamino group and hydrolysis of the methyl ester.

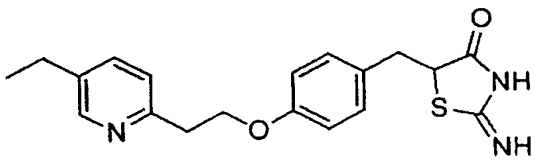
9. (Currently Amended) A method for production of pioglitazone which comprises subjecting a compound of formula IV obtained by the process of ~~according to~~ claim 2 , ~~characterized in that in addition it comprises~~ to the following stages ~~for production of pioglitazone (I)~~:

(a) bromination of compound (IV) to obtain the compound of formula (XI)



(XI)

(b) condensation of compound (XI) with thiourea to obtain the compound of formula (XII)



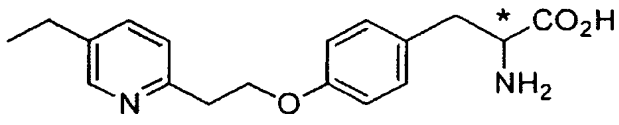
(XII)

(c) hydrolysis of compound (XII) to obtain pioglitazone.

10. (Canceled)

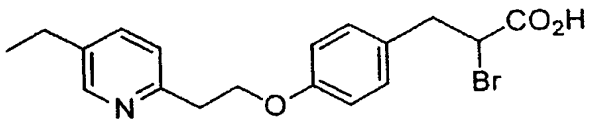
11 (new) A method for production of pioglitazone which comprises subjecting a compound of formula IV to the following steps:

(a) bromination of compound (IV)



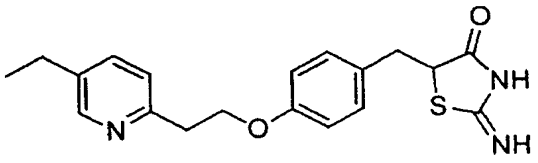
(IV)

to obtain the compound of formula (XI)



(XI)

(b) condensation of compound (XI) with thiourea to obtain the compound of formula (XII)



(XII)

(c) hydrolysis of compound (XII) to obtain pioglitazone.